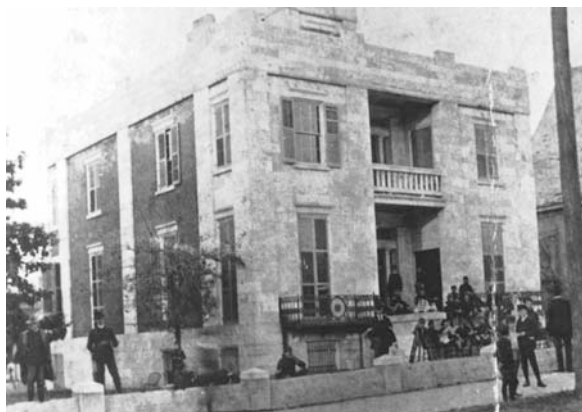


According to the plans of the Committee of Twenty-Five, Alfred Moore Waddell waited at home until about 8:00 A.M., approximately a half hour longer than the deadline for a reply from the CCC. He then proceeded to walk down Fifth Street to the Wilmington Light Infantry armory on Market. Once Waddell arrived, he was met by a crowd of about 500 men eager to learn the answer to the Declaration by the CCC. The *Wilmington Messenger* remarked that the assembled crowd was armed and represented a cross section of the town, including large numbers of professionals and clergy. Some of the men were exhausted—some had been on patrol all night and others had slept at the armory—a focal point of demonstrations and planning sessions in the days and weeks leading up to November 10.⁵



Wilmington Light Infantry Armory,
November 1898

Image: New Hanover County Public Library

⁵ Originally the home of John Allan Taylor, the building was constructed around 1847 and acquired by the volunteer military organization in 1892 for use as its headquarters and armory. Wrenn, *Architecture of Wilmington*; *Wilmington Messenger*, November 11, 1898; McDuffie, "Politics in Wilmington," 694; Hayden, "Introduction to the Wilmington Rebellion," 21.

In addition to the readiness of Roger Moore's paramilitary organization, groups of true military units were in the city—the State Guard militia unit of the WLI under Captain T.C. James, active duty federal troops in Company K under Captain MacRae, and federal troops from the Naval Reserves under Commander George Morton.⁶ These men awaited the morning

⁶ Earlier in 1898, some members of the WLI were called up by Governor Russell to serve in active duty in the Spanish-American War as part of Company K, 2nd North Carolina Volunteer Infantry. They had just returned home in late September on furlough after seeing no action on the battlefield. Captain Donald MacRae worried over the return of his troops to Wilmington in the midst of heated speeches and marches in favor of white supremacy in the upcoming election. In a letter written from Raleigh on September 18, 1898, Captain MacRae warned Douglas Cronly, former captain of the WLI and member of Company K, that he had suggested to Captain James of the WLI "in as delicate as way as possible that it would be advisable to 'water' any stimulants which may be provided for the boys" during the festivities to mark their return home. MacRae's worries were well founded since many North Carolina soldiers who returned to Raleigh after the war's end found themselves in drunken brawls and shoot-outs with black Raleigh citizens. There seems to have been a small degree of tension between the members of the WLI that left to be "Spaniard fighters" and those who remained at home. MacRae urged that "undesirable discussions" should be limited between the two groups in order to prevent any friction. Returning troops were aware of the activities of the white supremacy campaign since Josephus Daniels and the Democratic Party circulated copies of the *News and Observer* among troops while they were stationed in Florida.

Men within Commander George Morton's Naval Reserves also returned to Wilmington in the fall of 1898. The Naval Reserves crew represented a wider spectrum of Wilmington's population than did the roster of the WLI. Members of the crew came from both the upper classes of society but also from the lower, laboring sections, including a small number of African Americans. Members of the Naval Reserves experienced an even more frustrated participation in the war than did the WLI forces. Their ship, the *Nantucket*, limped into Port Royal, South Carolina and did not leave for the duration of the war, serving, instead, as a defense and training